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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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STATEMENT BY MARLIN FITZWATER
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR PRESS RELATIONS

The President is pleased with the overwhelming, bipartisan votes of the Senate and the House of Representatives condemning the outrageous actions of the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua. These votes send the message to the Sandinistas that the United States is firmly committed to the achievement of freedom and democracy in Nicaragua.

Just this week, the Sandinistas have shut down the two media outlets for free expression in Nicaragua -- the newspaper La Prensa and Catholic Radio -- and they have brutally suppressed a peaceful demonstration for human rights, arrested leaders of the democratic opposition, and expelled the U.S. Ambassador and much of his staff.

The Sandinistas continue to snuff out any hope for democratic reform in Nicaragua, despite the solemn promises to establish democracy that they have made and broken repeatedly in the decade since they seized power. They continue to oppress the Nicaraguan people and receive substantial Soviet bloc military shipments.

The Sandinistas' conduct makes clear that they will not institute democratic reform and cease their threats to the security of Central America unless effectively pressured and persuaded to do so. To achieve democracy in Nicaragua and security for all of Central America clearly requires a viable and effective Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance.

When the Congress returns, the President hopes they will move swiftly to enact legislation currently being formulated in the Senate for further aid to the Resistance.

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